

For all information on eligibility for the competition, please see the Terms & Conditions.

### Individual Language Ability

The judges are looking for real communication and presentation, not rehearsed performance. The winner of each category will be someone who has really got to grips with the Mandarin language appropriate to their level of learning.

However judges will have to bear in mind that the competitors are children who are foreign learners of the language and have only been exposed to classroom Mandarin.

### Format

There are three categories in the Individual Language Ability section – Beginner, Intermediate and Advanced.

#### **Beginner, Beginner Plus**

- Prepared speech
- Questions
- Translation sentences

#### **Intermediate, Intermediate Plus**

- Prepared speech
- Questions
- Scenario

#### **Advanced**

- Prepared speech
- Questions
- Translation sentences
- Impromptu speech

- **Prepared speech (all categories):** each student will give a two minute presentation in Mandarin on a prepared topic from the National Curriculum, e.g. family and friends, school, home and pets, leisure time, festivals etc. The choice of topic should be appropriate to the student's level of learning. Each student will then be asked two questions in Mandarin relating to their presentation to ensure understanding and to verify the presentation has not been rehearsed.
- **Translation (beginner and advanced):** each student will translate 3 sentences from English into Mandarin Chinese. Students receive points not only for correct translation of the whole sentence but can gain score for translating individual words correctly.
- **Scenario (intermediate only):** a scenario will appear on the screen in English which will require students to ask follow-up questions or make comments in Mandarin. They will have 45 seconds to prepare and one minute to speak.
- **Impromptu speech (advanced only):** students will be given a topic or phrase in Mandarin and will be asked to give a short impromptu speech. They will have one minute to prepare and one minute to give your presentation.

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## Judging Criteria

### **Short presentation**

Students will not be allowed to read their presentation from a script and will not be allowed to use PowerPoint. Brief, bullet-pointed notes (up to a maximum of 25 words in English only) are permitted. The MC will check notes before students begin their presentation and ask them to show it to the Judges as well. Students may also bring **one** picture **or** object with them if they wish to illustrate their presentation. Pictures and objects may not have any text on them.

Students must prepare their own presentations, with only teacher corrections.

Presentations may last up to 2 minutes. At 1 minute 45 seconds students will be shown how much time they have left. At 2 minutes the presentation will be stopped. The presentation will be followed by two to three questions from one of the Judges will be based around the topic of the presentation. Although the questions will not specifically be awarded marks, the Judges may decrease scores in the marking if the student cannot demonstrate an ability to talk about what was contained in their presentation.

Marks out of **5** will be awarded in each of the following four categories. A total out of **20** will be awarded for the presentation, with a total of **10** awarded for the following questions (5 points per question)

Communication: Students will be judged on the richness of the message conveyed and the extent to which they demonstrate understanding of that message. Students should be a bit adventurous, but not to the point where they do not understand what they are saying. Students who tackle subjects that are well outside their life experience may have difficulty expressing themselves. If the Judges deem the level of ability to be beyond the category that the student has been placed in, they reserve the right to investigate further into the background and the educational level of the student.

Fluency: The judges will of course take into account students' nervousness on the day. However, there should be evidence that candidates can speak fluently without too much memorisation; students who learn their presentation by heart are likely to become lost if they forget their lines. Judges want to see students who can improvise on the basis of the language they know, and their own interests. The questions asked following presentation are designed to test this understanding and marks may be deducted for this if the student cannot answer the questions.

Usage – vocabulary and grammar: Vocabulary and grammatical structures should be appropriate to the age and experience of the student. However, within the range of their own experience, they should find interesting, exciting ways of describing, explaining and expressing opinions. Dictionary-type lists should be avoided: vocabulary should be integrated into a meaningful discourse. Students should not use vocabulary or sentence structures outside their ability range as this would suggest teacher involvement. Perfect grammar is not necessary, as long as structures are mainly Chinese, rather than English.

Pronunciation: It is important that pronunciation is comprehensible and is clear enough for a sympathetic native speaker of Chinese to understand. This includes vowels, consonants, tones and stress patterns. A few wrong tones and wrong segments can be forgiven, but candidates should avoid pronouncing pinyin as if it were English because this makes communication ineffective. In previous years the pronunciation has implied that many students have memorised the pinyin version of their presentation.

**Questions following the presentation**: students will be asked two questions in Mandarin by the judging panel following their presentation. The aim of these questions will be to check that students understand and can talk about what they have said in their presentation and have not merely learnt it by heart. Judges will ask the questions sympathetically and will not be trying to catch students out. Students must answer in Mandarin and answers should be more than a few words. The questions should be really simple, particularly for the beginners and should as far as possible follow the students own sentence structure and vocabulary. They should be asked slowly and clearly bearing in mind that the students' exposure to Mandarin is classroom Mandarin.

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### **Translation (Beginners and Advanced categories)**

Each student will be asked to translate three sentences from English into Mandarin Chinese. This section indicates very clearly the level a student has reached.

Students will not be given the sentences in advance of the competition.

Each sentence is worth six marks with a bonus two marks if students translate all three correctly. Even if students cannot translate the whole sentence they should still attempt to translate the parts they know. A total out of **20** will be awarded for this section.

### **Scenario (Intermediate category)**

A scenario will appear on the screen in English which will require students to ask follow-up questions or make comments in Mandarin e.g. “e.g. “You need to go to the doctors because you’ve hurt yourself playing football. Tell the doctor what happened (in Mandarin) and ask what you need to do.”

They will be given 45 seconds to think about what they want to say, during which time they make notes but will not be able to confer with anyone else. They will then have up to one minute to speak.

A total out of **20** marks will be awarded for this section, with a maximum of **5** marks being awarded for each of communication, fluency, usage and pronunciation. For further information, please see the descriptions under “Element 1- Short presentation”.

### **Impromptu Speech (Advanced category)**

Students will be given a short stimulus sentence or phrase in Mandarin (in characters, pinyin and translated into English) e.g. “My favourite month of the year is X because ...” The stimulus sentence or phrase will be based on common knowledge. No specialist knowledge or vocabulary will be pre-supposed – it is up to the competitor to make their speech interesting and individual.

They will be given one minute to think about what they want to say, during which time they may make notes but will not be able to confer with anyone else. They will then have up to one minute to give an impromptu speech starting with the given sentence or phrase.

A total out of **20** marks will be awarded for this section, with a maximum of **5** marks being awarded for each of communication, fluency, usage and pronunciation. For further information, please see the descriptions under “Element 1- Short presentation”.

## **Group Performance**

The judges are looking for a group drama performance which has all the participants joining in and using the language.

### **Format**

The group performance can involve a short song in Chinese, a dance or martial arts display within the drama (and should relate to the context of what is happening in the story and should form a small part of the performance as a whole). The group performance should include “Cohesion” – which looks at the way in which the performance is structured and balanced and the way in which members of the group have contributed in equal proportions.

Groups must give a drama performance in Mandarin Chinese lasting up to 5 minutes. At 4 minutes 30 seconds the group will be shown how much time they have left. At 5 minutes the performance will be stopped.

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A group must be made up of five students from two or more year groups at the same school or college. Each school or college may only enter one group.

Groups may provide one piece of recorded music to play during their performance and one PowerPoint slide to be shown behind them during their performance.

All students involved in the performance are considered part of the group and the judges will take into account whether all students are equally involved in the performance. Teachers may not be involved in the performance in any capacity, other than operating the recorded music and/or PowerPoint. Recorded music and/or PowerPoint may only be operated by a teacher, not by a student.

At the regional heats, students may take written prompts on stage with them, but must not read from a script. Neither scripts nor prompts are permitted at the competition final.

### **Judging Criteria**

Scores will be awarded in each of the following four categories and the performances of all students in the group will be considered when awarding the score. Lower scores will be awarded where not all students play an active role in the performance.

Performances must be devised by students with only teacher corrections.

Marks will only be awarded for the students' performance, not for the PowerPoint, recorded music or costumes/props.

**Student Composition (out of 20):** Performances will be rewarded for scripts composed only by students. Where the script of a performance is clearly influenced by a teacher, marks will be deducted.

**Communication (out of 10):** Performances will be judged on the richness of the drama and the extent to which students demonstrate understanding of the messages they are conveying. Students should be a bit adventurous, but not to the point where they do not understand what they are saying.

**Pronunciation (out of 10):** It is important that pronunciation is comprehensible and is clear enough for a sympathetic native speaker of Mandarin Chinese to understand. This includes vowels, consonants, tones and stress patterns. A few wrong tones and wrong segments can be forgiven, but students should avoid pronouncing pinyin as if it were English because this makes communication ineffective.

**Usage – vocabulary and grammar (out of 10):** Vocabulary and grammatical structures should be appropriate to a performance devised by students. Students should not use vocabulary or sentence structures outside their ability range as this would suggest teacher involvement. However, within the range of their own ability, they should find interesting, exciting ways of making their characters express themselves. Dictionary-type lists should be avoided: vocabulary should be integrated into a meaningful dialogue. Perfect grammar is not necessary, as long as structures are mainly Chinese, rather than English.

**Cultural content (out of 10):** Performances should demonstrate the students' understanding of Chinese culture, modern and/or traditional. Ways to do this could include but are not limited to:

- including a short song, dance or martial arts display within the drama (the inclusion should make sense in the context of the drama) and cannot not be performed in English;
- basing the drama on a traditional or modern Chinese story;
- taking as a theme an important element of life in China in the past or today.

**Cohesion:** The performance should be structured and balanced in the way which allows the various members of the group contribute equally with regards to speaking Mandarin.

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